



MICHIGAN FITNESS FOUNDATION

requirements.

We are facing an obesity epidemic across this country and especially here in Michigan. The harsh reality is that for the first time in history, we have a whole generation of young people that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Quality health education and physical education is part of the solution to this growing problem. Students can acquire the skills to improve their lifelong health, thereby reducing health care costs. We also know that physically fit students perform better academically. A study in the *Journal of School Health* found that physically fit kids scored better on standardized math and English tests than their less fit peers.

If there are any concerns about the public's support of physical education, the *Harvard Forum on Health* commissioned a study and found that 91% support more physical education in schools as a way to combat childhood obesity. In a National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) survey of parents, 95% think a physical education curriculum should be part of the school experience for all students in grades K-12 and 76% think more school physical education could help control or prevent childhood obesity.

Quality physical education provides our students with the knowledge, skills, competence, and therefore confidence to be active for life. Your support of quality physical education will be a critical step in the right direction for Michigan's students for generations to come.

Thank you.

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Testimony

House Education Committee

HB 4465

April 24, 2013

Good morning Charwoman Lyons and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation. I am Mike Maisner, Vice President of Active Communities for the Michigan Fitness Foundation. I also serve as Chair of Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan, a coalition of more than 150 organizations all dedicated to reducing childhood obesity in our state.

I am here to speak in opposition to HB 4465. We are very concerned with language in the bill which would allow for substitution of the ½ credit for physical education with participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity.

As much as we value extracurricular activities such as marching band and high school athletics, they simply are not an equivalent replacement for a quality physical education curriculum. We certainly wouldn't consider teaching students math by simply playing Yahtzee. Similarly, we will not achieve a physically educated society if we simply run our students around by offering "physical activity". Comprehensive, standards based physical education curriculums are designed by some of the best minds in kinesiology, motor development research, and instructional design. Not unlike a math or science curriculum, they follow specific lesson plans with students learning and demonstrating competencies that are measureable and aligned with national standards. Please do not make changes to the Michigan merit curriculum at the expense of quality physical education for our students.

It is important to note that Michigan's current requirement of ½ credit of physical education in high school is nowhere near the national standard. In fact it is only 12½% of the national standard adopted by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. Michigan's State Board of Education policy recommends that school districts meet this national standard. To further erode our physical education offerings would be a disservice to high school students in our state.

The Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition recommends amending HB 4465 to require one full credit (one school year) each of physical education and health education and removing the option to substitute other activities to meet these